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UNCLAS ADANA 000075

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR APRIL 8, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for April 8, 2005.

Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

OZGUR GUNDEM: Walter Scott Reid, the U.S. Adana Consul, paid a courtesy visit to DEHAP's (Democratic People's Party) Provincial Headquarters in Mersin. During his visit, the issues discussed were the flag-incident in Mersin and recent political and economic issues.

BOLGE: Environmentalists have planted citrus fruit seedlings outside the coal-fired Sugoza power plant in Yumurtalik district of Adana. The twenty-person-group comprised representatives of environmentalist organizations from "around the world" as well as students from the Cukurova, Erciyes and ODTU universities in Turkey.

BOLGE: Bolge newspaper draws attention to complaints against Yuregir Municipality's bureaucrats' in Adana, including Yuregir's Deputy Mayor Yuregir Mehmet Abaci, who was allegedly assigned to his position thanks to his business partner, Yuregir Mayor Omer Topcu. Reportedly, Mehmet Abaci has only a primary school graduate but is exercising full control over the affairs of the Municipality.

EVRENSEL: Kemal Unakitan, Finance Minister, will be arriving in Diyarbakir today to address the issue of landmines in the border area with Syria. Unakitan plans to fly by helicopter to examine the border area, beginning with the Kozluca site of Nusaybin district in Mardin.

CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM / EVRENSEL: Fourteen-year-old Mehmet Latif Yilmaz died when a landmine exploded as he was digging his field in Tasliburun village of Midyat district in Mardin. Cumhuriyet reports that it was reported to be an anti-personnel mine laid in the ground by the PKK. Separately, in another mine incident in Lice district of Diyarbakir, one PKK terrorist was killed and another injured as they attempted to lay a mine on a road used by military vehicles.

EKSPRES: Kemal Anadol, CHP (Republican People's Party) Deputy Chairperson of the Party Group in the Turkish Parliament, said that they would not let anyone breach the Turkish Constitution by making an agreement with the U.S. that bypassed a decision to be given by parliament.

EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: Radio Dunya had opened a lawsuit with Ankara Business Court against RTUK (Supreme Board of Radio and Television) after it received a warning by RTUK for broadcasting a program in September 2001 which featured three hours of Kurdish songs. The prosecution process ended recently in favor of Radya Dunya; the Supreme Court of Administrative Cases reportedly decided RTUK's warning was undue.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Turkey continues its military operations in the Gabar Mountains. Beginning in the early morning, four Cobra helicopters reportedly bombed the area and a 50-vehicle military convoy traveled to the same place at noon. The paper reports that many Turkish soldiers (allegedly) died in the conflicts. Meanwhile, Security officers from Sirnak's Main Jandarma Command raided the home of Osman Ayan, a DEHAP (Democratic People's Party) member and arrested him upon allegedly finding four hand grenades, four empty Kalachnikov cylinders and bullets of a BKC-brand machine gun in front of Ayan's house. DEHAP's Sirnak Provincial Chairperson described the finding of the guns in Ayan's place as a "scenario that is contrived".

OZGUR GUNDEM: Syrian State Planning Institute Chairperson Abdullah Dardari, accompanied by a Syrian delegation, arrived in Gaziantep and was welcomed by the Turkish State Planning Institute Chairperson, Gaziantep's Governor, Gaziantep University's Rector, and the Gaziantep Mayor. Dardari said that the border gates should be widened to make them more convenient for people to pass through. During the meetings, the infrastructure deficiencies of border gates will reportedly be discussed.

REID